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NEWS RELEASE

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International Partnership Completes Decade-Long Conversion to Worldwide, Digital Vector Data

BETHESDA, Md.—With the recent completion of the decade-long Vector Map Level 1 program, geospatial analysis efforts worldwide received a significant boost. An international effort, led by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, collected vector data—the digitized points, lines and polygons representing features on Earth—to create the best available standardized data of its kind.

Analysts use vector data for high-level analysis and cartographic products. Standardized data enables users worldwide to work from a common reference point. VMap1 data separates into thematic layers—or coverages—with all the data topographically—or smartly—structured. Available data includes boundaries, elevation, hydrography, industry, physiography, population, transportation, utilities and vegetation. The Defense Logistics Agency distributes this data to the U.S. military on CDs, while publicly releasable data is available on the Internet and through the Geospatial-Intelligence Feature Database.

Cooperation among the international geospatial community, including contract and government employees of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and Unites States, made the project possible.

New Zealand-produced data aided in tsunami recovery and relief efforts in Southeast Asia. Additional data is assisting relief efforts in Pakistan. Another project data set formed the basis of a Northern Italy Reference graphic instrumental in planning efforts for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Turin.

The program—known as VMap1—responded to the needs of the geospatial industry. In the early 1990s, the industry shifted from the production of static paper maps to the direct digital input of dynamic information into geographic information systems. With the delivery of the final CD (of 234 total) in December 2005, NGA and its international co-producers and contractors completed a 12-year project providing near-global coverage.

Marzio Dellagnello of NGA's Global Foundation Office led the Vector Map Co-Production Working Group team responsible for the production and provision of VMap1 data and products. "Scanned paper maps provided most of the source data for the project," said Dellagnello, who worked on the project from its inception. His team provided quality control of the data.

An off-shoot of the project is the Multinational Geospatial Co-Production Program, a five-year, international effort to further the cooperation and success of the VMap1 project. MGCP will produce a series of higher resolution vector data sets, and has increased the number of participating countries from 19 to 28. (VMap1 data specifications are for a 1:250,000 scale, while MGCP's goal is 1:50,000 to 1:100,000.)

NGA is a Department of Defense combat support agency and a member of the National Intelligence Community. The Agency's mission is to provide timely, relevant and accurate geospatial intelligence in support of our national security. Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., NGA has major facilities in the Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and St. Louis, Mo., areas with NGA support teams worldwide.

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